

# CAREER NAVIGATION: CREATING PATHWAYS FOR YOUNG ADULTS

Capstone Project for Georgia 2Gen Academy



Justice-involved youth and young people in foster care are often aware of available supports, but they don't have the guidance or coordinated handoffs needed to access them effectively. As a result, critical transition points – like leaving foster care or re-entering the community – often become points where these youth lose connection and the opportunity to turn those resources into meaningful outcomes. From a 2Gen perspective, this reinforces an important idea: we need to fix the context, not the person, and ensure our systems are truly working for the people who rely on them. This is the gap our project aims to address.

## What's already in place?

The tables below highlight existing career navigation programs and supports through the Department of Juvenile Justice and Division of Family & Children Services.

Key: ✓ strong focus    ◐ partial / varies    — not a primary focus

### Supports through the Department of Juvenile Justice

	Workforce Pathways	Transition Support	Ongoing/ Reentry Support
TCSG Partnership	✓	◐	—
Reentry Coordinators	—	✓	✓
Transition Plans	—	✓	◐
Café Momentum	✓	—	◐
Second Chance Employers	✓	—	—






















For justice-involved youth, we see a strong and well-developed set of supports already in place, both during incarceration and as youth transition back into their communities. One key example is the partnership with the Technical College System of Georgia, which provides access to career pathways, industry-recognized credentials, and technical training while youth are still in detention. Many of these credentials are transferable, allowing youth to continue their education without starting over after release.

There are also structured transition supports through DJJ for up to 60 days post release, including individualized transition plans and reentry resource coordinators who help connect youth to services like education, workforce opportunities, housing, and mentoring during those critical first weeks after release. In addition, community partnerships, such as Cafe Momentum and second-chance employers, are creating real opportunities for workforce engagement and employment.

So overall, what this shows is that Georgia has a strong foundation of programs addressing different aspects of the transition experience.

These programs are addressing key areas like education, workforce development, and reentry support, but as the chart highlights, these supports are often delivered across different programs rather than as a fully coordinated system meaning youth may still experience gaps as they move between them.

## Supports through Division of Family & Children Services

	Workforce Pathways	Transition Support	Ongoing/ Wraparound Support
Independent Living Program (ILP)			
Georgia Resilient. Youth-Centered. Stable. Empowered. (GA RYSE)			
Extended Youth Support Services (EYSS)			
Connected by 21			
Bloom Beyond			
GA CREW			
EMBARK			

When we look at supports for youth aging out of foster care, we see a similarly strong and comprehensive set of programs already in place.

At the foundation is the Independent Living Program, which helps prepare youth ages 14 - 21 for adulthood through life skills development in areas like education, employment readiness, financial literacy, and daily living.

Building on that, GA RYSE expands support by addressing practical barriers youth may face- such as housing stability, employment readiness, and overall well-being- creating a broader continuum of preparation as youth move toward independence.

For youth ages 18 - 21 who have already aged out of care, programs like Extended Youth Support Services provide continued support into early adulthood, including case management, housing assistance, and educational support, while encouraging ongoing connections with mentors and trusted adults.

We also see initiatives like Connected by 21 and Embark Georgia working to connect youth to education, workforce opportunities, and critical services while helping them build long-term support networks.

And programs like GA CREW and Bloom Beyond introduce important elements of workforce exposure and wraparound support, including more direct navigation and coaching.

Collectively, these programs address many key areas: life skills, workforce development, housing, and ongoing support.

However, these supports are often delivered across different programs, rather than as a single, coordinated pathway meaning the experience for youth can still feel fragmented across systems. So while the foundation is strong, how these systems function together has a direct impact on outcomes, not just for youth, but for Georgia's workforce and economy.

Justice-involved and foster care youth are **aware of available resources** but often **lack the in-person guidance and support** needed to effectively access and use them. The core **gap is not information, but the absence of navigation**, human connection, and coordinated handoffs **during critical transition periods**.

# Recommendations

Georgia's young people, especially those who are justice-involved or in foster care, face a complex landscape of education, workforce, and support programs. Our recommendations focus on creating a more connected system that pairs resources with the relationships and guidance youth need to move forward with confidence.

## In-Person Career Navigator

Connecting Youth to Opportunity, Support, and Success



We recommend establishing **in-person Career Navigators** as a central point of support for youth. Embedded within trusted entry points - particularly the Technical College System of Georgia and local workforce systems - these navigators provide consistent, relationship-based guidance as young people explore career options, access training and credentials, and connect to employment. By offering a single, reliable guide across multiple systems, Career Navigators reduce the burden on youth to navigate complex processes alone and strengthen continuity during key transition moments.

## Universal Transition Plan

To complement this role, we recommend implementing a **Universal Transition Plan** that follows youth across systems and settings. This shared plan helps young people set goals, track progress, and identify the supports they need along the way. It creates a consistent structure used by education, workforce, and social service partners, giving youth greater ownership of their path while ensuring that all adults in their lives are working from the same roadmap.

## Impact

Together, these strategies create **a more connected and effective system** across Georgia. They support smoother transitions, deepen engagement, and lead to more sustainable outcomes. Most importantly, they ensure that young people are supported not only with resources, but with the **relationships and guidance** that make those resources meaningful.